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# THE LOST ART OF READING

W. R. NICOLL



KD 27638





THE  
LOST ART OF READING

BY  
W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, M.A., LL.D.



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# THE LOST ART OF READING.

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## I.

THE tendency of our time is to make reading difficult, and those who do not read are beginning to decry the habit as a mean and degrading vice. In a current magazine a brilliant novelist has an article entitled "The Vice of Reading." In another paper I find an argument controverting Bacon's saying that reading makes the full man. Even among men who live by writing, reading goes out of fashion. If you will permit me to relate a personal experience, I will say that while in London I am constantly impressed by the brilliance and versatility of many men of letters. Yet I find few among them who read much. A very moderately read man will be constantly humbled by the superior talents of his contemporaries, but if I may venture to say so, he will be seldom impressed by the extent of their reading.

I speak from the strictly orthodox point of view. I believe that the business of students

is to do the work of the day steadily, and to aim with all their strength at University distinction. Macaulay was undoubtedly right when he said a start gained at the University is often maintained in life. The fact that you win scholarships and prizes during your college career will help you in all your after years. To have passed through your curriculum without distinction will be more or less of a handicap. Besides, the habits of youth are apt to persist in manhood, and there is nothing that makes so much for success as the punctual and relentless discharge of the day's duty in the day. I am aware of the new claims made by athletic sports. Any reader of the newspapers will see that to be a great tennis player, or cricketer, or golfer helps a man to the highest offices in the State. It is not impossible to be eminent as a politician without any of these qualifications. There is one man, whom I need not name, of whom it is told not only that he never takes exercise, but that he has declared that he has never taken a walk without feeling distinctly the worse for it.

But I fully admit that distinction in athletics counts for much nowadays, directly or indirectly. I have even heard it said that it is an eminent and valued qualification in the teaching profession. It requires some boldness in these circumstances to make a plea for reading. If I

venture to maintain that the habit is not pernicious, and even that it may be fruitful of advantage, I hope for a patient hearing. Successful students have been known to read in their leisure time, and as all students cannot excel in intellectual or gymnastic competitions, it may not be the worst thing for them to cultivate a taste for books.

Life is full of surprises. It does not work out as you may fancy it will. You will discover, as the years go on, that one of the great and unsatisfied needs which trouble the great majority is the need for congenial society. There is no society like the society of fellow students. There is no fellowship in life like the fellowship between those who are young and buoyant and hopeful and engaged in common pursuits. No part of their life is unshareable. They can make common the experience of every hour. They are never in want of a subject and of something to say about it. They never bore each other. Those talks which you have in "midnights worth many a noon," you often long for as the days darken round you.

"Oh, years ayont, oh, years awa,  
My lads, ye'll mind whate'er befa',  
My lads, ye'll mind o' the bield o' the law  
When the mune was shining clearly."

I do not forget that young men are often more capable of bearing solitude than they are when they grow old. Solitude may even be beloved. You will not forget the intense three years which Descartes spent in the heart of Paris without seeing a single friend, or even so much as going out for a walk. But in the University life you can have society when you wish it, and it is the accessibility of congenial fellowship which comes to be such a craving. This difficulty of fellowship is peculiarly painful in dreary and remote places, and even in cities and in the midst of crowded life it is oftentimes a trial. A man confesses to himself that there is no brother of his heart within reach, no one to whom he can reveal his inmost self, no one with whom he can take counsel on work and destiny.

Then again you will discover that the great danger before you is not that you will turn out criminals or blackguards, not that you will wreck your life and shame your kindred. Happily there are not many black sheep in the flock. The danger is that you become respectable, decent, commonplace, uninteresting mediocrities. The danger is that thirty years after this those who remember what you were will lament with justice that the promise of your life has not been fulfilled, that

your mind has stagnated, that it takes in no new ideas. Under many an exterior apparently satisfied and even pompous, there is an inward chill. A man knows well that he has not done as he might have done, and what he should have done. He has got through without great disaster, and that is much, but he has failed to keep mind and soul alive, and having failed thus, he has lost the best and highest form of happiness.

One thing is certain, whatever your career may be, distinguished or undistinguished, you will pass through it in the conviction that you are overburdened with work. Many of you will be overburdened. Those of you who are not really put to strain will need as much as the rest a city of the mind. You will get fellowship there, and if you are debarred from the satisfying fellowship of your kind, you may find it in books. Lord Rosebery once made a political allegory of the oyster. He spoke of him as "an eminently self-contained character. His shell is his castle, his house is attached to a rock, and within that shell and attached to that rock he is absolutely aloof from the storms and catastrophes of the world." The oyster is self-contained, but no human being can afford to be self-contained. For the rest, the signs are that life will be marred by over tension.

It is of little use to preach the gospel of relaxation against the gospel of work. Relaxation has become a business quite as much as work. As practised in the present day, it tends to strain almost as much as any amount of daily labor. What is needed to tranquillize anxious spirits and smooth care-worn brows is the secure possession of some treasure, the value of which does not fluctuate with the price of stocks. The eager and the nervous and the hurried need, above all things, not strenuous play, but repose. Among famous men, Charles Dickens is a conspicuous example of all a man loses when he has no city of refuge into which he may run and be at peace. I preach to you the value of reading on this account. Among your books you can escape from the weight of care, from the crowd of engagements, into a realm of tranquillity. You return refreshed and strengthened. No matter what your physicians say, there is no more restful, no more soothing, no more pacifying place of renewal.

Were it only for this, the art of reading would be worth acquiring. But I put it on still higher ground. Whatever your profession may be, you will discharge your duties more wisely, more efficiently, to use the current word, if you know books. The vision of wider horizons, the contact with greater minds, will bring you

stronger and calmer to every duty. Men will not say of you that you have ceased to grow. You will be regarded, even when your hair is gray, as a man who cannot quite be reckoned up, as a man who may yet do something. Even in the intercourse of daily life you will be more interesting and more welcome. Dr. Johnson has said that of all accomplishments the accomplishment of conversation is the most desirable, because it is always needed, it always gives pleasure, it is always the first test by which men judge one another. You will do better work in every sphere, you will have more friends and warmer, if you are a lover and cultivator of literature. You will not be in danger of becoming too old and being judged too old for work, when there are yet before you some forty years of life.

If any whom I address are not yet addicted to books, I am almost tempted to say that you are too old to begin. This is not true, happily, and yet the great readers of the world have begun very early. To realize in a great degree the delights of reading, one should be able to contrive the circumstances of his birth. He should, if possible, arrange to be related to a bookseller, or at the very least a devoted bookman.

Two of the greatest among our men of

letters practically owed everything to their connections with booksellers. Dr. Johnson was unquestionably the first of English men of letters in the eighteenth century, and Lord Macaulay the first in the nineteenth century. So far as I know, none of the many writers on Dr. Johnson have given anything like a proper account of the Doctor's obligations to his father, the bookseller of Lichfield. Dr. Johnson's father was a great bookseller, and a man of real attainments. "He propagated learning all over his diocese," wrote a chaplain of Lord Gower in 1716. "All the clergy here are his pupils, and suck all they have from him."

Young Samuel Johnson read in his father's shop from the beginning. Whatever he learned at the grammar school, he learned a great deal more at home. His father, like many of the old booksellers, had an excellent stock of the best literature, and Johnson was always climbing the shelves to take down books. He told Bennet Langton that his period of study was from the age of twelve to eighteen. On another occasion he said that he had not read works of amusement, "but of literature, sir, of ancient writers — all manly." This is not strictly correct, for he devoured the romances of chivalry in his boyhood, and in manhood preferred them to all other books.

When he spent a part of the summer of 1704 at Dr. Percy's parsonage, he diligently perused in the original French, from beginning to end, the folio volume of *Felixnarte of Hircania*. One day he clambered to an upper shelf to look for some apples which he suspected his brother had hidden behind a high folio. The folio contained the Latin and Italian works of Petrarch. Having heard Petrarch's name mentioned as one of the restorers of learning, young Johnson fastened on it immediately, and read nearly to the end.

Long after, when he was fifty-four, he said to Boswell, "Sir, in my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection, but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now." It was in six years that he acquired this immense knowledge. When he went to Pembroke College at Oxford his father accompanied him, and informed the Fellows that his son was a good scholar and a poet, and wrote Latin verses. The Fellows were incredulous, but Samuel suddenly struck into the conversation, and to the astonishment of the company quoted Macrobius. To young Johnson his college teachers appeared illiterate, and he treated them with contempt.

It must be remembered that this reading in early years impresses the mind much more deeply than what is read later. Johnson at eighteen was

one of the most fully equipped bookmen of his country. He learned also what is best learned in youth, how to read rapidly. He got at the substance of a book directly, and tore the mind out of it. So it came to pass in later years he was first in his own class (with the possible exception of Joseph Warton) so far as the aggregate extent of his information was concerned. Dryden, Addison, and Swift were all scholars, but Johnson overtopped them. In later years he re-read in part many of the books he had mastered in his youth, but the catalogue of his library, which was privately printed by a member of the Johnson Club, shows that it was mainly in the direction of literary history that his knowledge was extended.

Macaulay's connection with a bookseller was quite as important. His father was an Evangelical of the strictest sect. The Evangelicals of that period denounced the reading of fiction on better grounds than those who have not studied the fiction of their time are aware. Zachary Macaulay was an excellent but bigoted and disagreeable man, and if he had married a wife like himself his son's literary development would have been practically impossible. Happily, however, he fell in love with Selina Mills, the daughter of a bookseller in Bristol. Mr. Mills, of Bristol, was an old man of imposing

presence, with long white beard, and talked incessantly about Jacob Boehme. One of his sons edited the "Bristol Journal," and made some figure in light literature.

The beautiful Selina was a favorite pupil of Hannah More, and a great reader, preferring a book that interested her to any company, however distinguished and agreeable. She was, no doubt, very fond of fiction, and her son fell into her ways. From the time he was three years old he read incessantly, for the most part lying on the rug before the fire with his book on the ground and a piece of bread and butter in his hand. He cared little for toys or for playing with other children, but he loved to expound to his nurse out of a volume almost as big as himself. His memory retained without effort the phrases of the books he read, and he talked, as his nursemaid said, in "quite printed words." When he was a little boy a servant spilt some hot coffee over his legs. When asked by a lady how he was feeling, he replied, "Thank you, madam, the agony has abated." When he was seven years old he began to write an abridgment of universal history, and followed by essaying an epic. It was the influence of the old Bristol bookseller working through his daughter that saved Macaulay from ending as a narrow precisian. I am sure, though I have no direct

evidence, that his love for Mrs. Meek's novels was derived from his mother.

Nevertheless a real love for reading may come later in life. Joseph Scaliger, whom Mark Pattison describes as the most richly endowed intellect that ever devoted itself to the acquiring of knowledge, did not begin Greek till he was nineteen. Then he shut himself in his room and became his own teacher. He took "Homer," with a Latin translation, and went through it in twenty-one days, forming his own grammar at the time, the only grammar he ever had. Scaliger said that his secret was determination, and that determination was the best and only way to learning. If you wish to care for reading, you must begin to read, and go on reading till you really care. This is a stage which no one human being out of a thousand ever reaches. The first trials of a new game are never pleasant. When you begin golf you are exasperated by your failures; if you persevere, you acquire some skill, and after that you go on.

It is precisely so with reading. You may not naturally care for reading, or read if you can do anything else. But if you begin by reading the things that you like — within certain obvious limitations — and persevere in the practice, you will gradually discover that you have formed the most pleasant of all habits. I know there is

much said about courses of reading, but those who go in for courses of reading very seldom care for reading in itself, and though they may find their reading useful in the way of business advancement, they do not build for themselves the dear city of books. Dr. Johnson was right when he said that if a man will read four hours a day at anything he will become in due time a wise man.

## II.

How much may one expect to read? How much should one read to deserve the name of a bookman? Before attempting to reply, it may be interesting to consider what was read by one great bookman. Mr. Morley says very finely that no one can read Lord Macaulay's life without being awed and touched by his wonderful devotion to literature. His was a happy life, and he never failed to acknowledge that its main happiness was found in books. What was this great reader able to master? In his valuable essay on Lord Macaulay, Professor Montague endeavors to estimate the range of Macaulay's reading. He knew the Greek and Latin classics well. He was also deeply versed in the literatures of England, France, and Italy, as their limits were fixed in his youth. In French literature he began with Corneille and ended with Voltaire, never quoting Rabelais or Montaigne. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio he knew well, and he was familiar with the Italian authors of the sixteenth century, and of the age of decline which followed. He knew the great Spanish writers, and read and admired

the more famous poets and critics of Germany. Professor Montague says that he does not seem to have cared much for anything written before the age of Spenser and Shakespeare, and that he disliked contemporary authors like Carlyle and Ruskin. I venture to think that Professor Montague hardly does justice to Macaulay's extreme familiarity with all the literature, great and small, of the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century.

Such was the achievement of the most strenuous and unwearied of readers. For ourselves we must be content with much less, but in an ordinary life something may be done. Before it ends, a diligent reader will perhaps find his accomplishment fairly described as thus: He has read a fair share of the greater books in English literature, and he has read some of them well. He knows, for example, Shakespeare and Scott with as much familiarity as to be able to know where he is when a page is open. He has selected and mastered some of the poets and a few of the novelists. One hundred books carefully read have introduced him to the masterpieces. Among these he has made special friends.

It is a great thing to know what it is to know, to be in real fellowship with a leading mind, a mind chosen not because its conclusions are those

with which we happen to agree, but because we recognize a kinship and hear it speaking to us. The unconscious drift of human thought has more of true guidance in it than even its more conscious and deliberate flow, and the mind may be more powerfully and beneficially influenced by a novelist than by an expressly didactic writer. You will soon be able to tell that you know more about some authors than other people do. You may find it out by reading histories of English literature. It is a pleasant thing to feel that one knows a little, and can occasionally correct a professor. Besides, a strong writer touches life at so many points that in the study of him you find your miscellaneous reading coördinates itself, and that you have strung your acquisitions, such as they are, upon some dominant thread.

Again, the reader should be able to keep up a fair acquaintance with current literature. To say that a man should only read the great books is much as if one should say that he ought to have no acquaintances, but only friends, that there ought to be no space in his life for commonplace talk with commonplace people. The true bookman can read anything. Under dire stress of literary famine he may be driven to dry and worthless books, and he will be able to abstract something from them. A brilliant

writer is accustomed to say that it is no credit to any one to like good books. A man has no right to be proud that he enjoys reading Boswell, but he has some right to be proud and some right to claim the title of a bookman if he can read the "Early Homes of the Prince Consort." Of the 5,000 books published in a year, perhaps fifty attain something like a general currency, and it ought to be easy to read them. It is undoubtedly the weakness of some of our greatest writers that they have closed their minds sharply on the new developments of genius.

To know the books preferred by your contemporaries is to possess a key by which you can enter their minds. There is no better or more refreshing talk among such beings as we are, and on such conditions as ours are, than talk over new books. I add that the true reader ought to have some favorite books to which he can turn for refreshment and inspiration. These favorite books will not as a rule be the best books. What is it that attracts us to human beings? We may not prefer the best, the cleverest, and the wisest, and the noblest, and the most beautiful. There are those who please us because in their company we are always at rest. It is so with books. We may keep the faith in criticism, and know very well how far short our favorites fall of the

highest rank, and yet with undisturbed conscience turn and take them to our hearts.

Sir Walter Scott's favorite poet was Dr. Johnson, though none knew better than Scott that Johnson is in the second rank as a poet. Dante put Lucan as a poet before himself. Locke, who has been named with Bain as the chief contributor to the science of mind in our country, preferred Blackmore to all other poets. Macaulay laughed at Mrs. Meek, but he knew her novels almost by heart. Another special friend of his was Marivaux' "Life of Marianne." R. H. Hutton named as his favorite book Cardinal Newman's "Callista," which showed what Christianity had to do in the days of the martyrs, and what it really did. Beside that he put Grimm's "Fairy Tales," which for him put by the cloud of mortal destiny as no other book would. A third favorite was Scott's "Abbot," Hutton knew very well that "The Abbot" is not among Scott's greater achievements, but it moved him. Dr. Johnson seems to have liked best Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," the only book that ever took him out of bed, though why Johnson, who read so many other books in bed, had to get up to read Burton is among the things that are not revealed. The books that awaken the activity of our truer selves should be our favorite books.

## III.

THE true reader must be a book buyer. It is absolutely necessary to buy books. Libraries have their place and serve their turn. Some of us get many new books without buying them, but the only books I have really cared for are the books I have bought, even at considerable sacrifice, and the books that have been given me by friends. Even for a poor man in a dying nation it is quite easy to buy books. I knew from the beginning a bookman who left 17,000 volumes behind him which he had collected on an income that never reached £200 a year. For sixty years he spent between £20 and £40 upon books.

Some of the greatest collectors have been very poor men. The time would fail me to tell of them, but I must not forget M. Parisson, who with an income of £250 a year left behind him an astonishing collection. It was he who possessed that treasure of treasures, Montaigne's "Cæsar." He picked it up on a bookstall in Paris, guarded it five years without breathing a word of its existence. Then Dr. Payen, who traced or recovered upwards of

thirty volumes which were in the possession of Montaigne, got scent of its existence. He laid siege to M. Parison's elevated citadel, and by a series of dedications, notes, and allusions, sometimes flattering and sometimes caustic, he obtained possession of the inestimable gem. M. Parison, having yielded up his "Cæsar," had no more joy in life, so he immediately took to his bed and died.

I do not say that with a small income you can do as much as could once be done in the way of collecting rarities. But if you start with the resolution to spend each year as much on books as you spend on clothes, you will find that in twenty years you are well off. Much can be done by men of moderate means in collecting books on one subject. I know four men in London, all of them engaged in commercial pursuits, and none of them rich. One has collected practically everything of Shelley. He has one of the two known copies of "Victor and Cazire." Another has devoted himself to Matthew Arnold. I believe he has everything of Arnold's down to his fugitive and unacknowledged newspaper articles. A third has collected the numerous publications of Walter Savage Landor. We have had and still have in Scotland some very fine collections of Burns. Of all authors Ruskin has been the most assidu-

ously collected. But a really complete set of Ruskin would cost a very large sum. Something might be done in the collection of Johnsoniana. So far as I know, there is no Johnson library in this country to compare with the magnificent collection of a friend of mine in Buffalo.

But the wisest thing is to buy the books you like and can afford, as they come in your way. To indulge in rarities is distinctly dangerous. The man of modest means should be very careful not to cultivate fine bindings. I know the allurements of

"Red morocco's gilded gleam  
And vellum rich as country cream."

But it is a perilous taste. We are entitled to something, perhaps. We should have a few books that are not quite common, a few books which friends might regard with envy. I think also we should have a few good bindings, not too many, but some—some in vellum stamped with gold, a few Elzevir classics, and some other things not too hard to come by.

## IV.

BY beginning early and minding our business as well as our books, we may hope before we die to build a book-room. It is practically certain that no man can have a book-room to his mind unless he designs it himself. Some of the greatest bookmen hold that the working room should have only a few books in it, that the library should be housed in a place which is visited, but not lived in. Many bookmen consider that their room should be inviolate. The visitor is apt to imagine that it is disorderly, ignoring the grand plan in the owner's mind. He, or rather she, may even take the monstrous step of arranging things. Against this enormous wrong no precautions can be too rigid.

Henry Stephens had a library which contained untold treasures of Greek, but he allowed no one to enter it. Even when the great scholar Casaubon married his daughter Florence, he was not allowed access to the library. Henry Stephens never returned anything that was entrusted to him, but on one occasion the door was forced by Rittershusius, who had lent Stephens his notes on Oppian. He wanted them

back, as they were of great importance to him. He did his best with Stephens, but Stephens, in conformity with his regular and judicious practice, took no notice of his demands. Then when Stephens was absent, Rittershusius had recourse to Casaubon, vehemently urging the restitution of his notes, Casaubon and his mother-in-law, after earnest consultation, resolved to break open the prohibited chamber, and the notes on Oppian were found. This, we are told, was absolutely the only occasion on which Casaubon ever saw the inside of the library, for in 1598 he informed Scaliger that he had never inspected Stephens' books, not only not since his death, but never at all.

As to the proper shape of a book-room, I had my first ideas in boyhood from Lord Lytton's "Eugene Aram." Lytton was himself a true bookman, and a much better man in every way than the present generation understands. Aram settled down in a house which had belonged to a family of some note, whose heirs had outstripped their fortunes. His library was "the most spacious room in the house, and was indeed of considerable dimensions. It contained in front one large window. Jutting from the wall opposite was an antique and high mantelpiece of black oak. The rest of the room was walled from the floor to the roof

with books; volumes of all languages, and it might even be said without much exaggeration upon all sciences, were strewn around on the chairs, the tables, or the floor. By the window stood the student's desk and a large old-fashioned chair of oak. A few papers filled with astronomical calculations were on the desk, and these were all the witnesses of the result of study."

Later on I came to the much more charming story of Montaigne's book-room. Montaigne, you will remember, when he had reached the age of thirty-seven, resolved to withdraw from public life, and to spend the succeeding years in the composition of his immortal essays. His library was on the third floor of one of the turrets of his chateau. There were four stories in the turret; the chapel on the first floor, the bedroom on the second, and the library above. The room had three large windows. It was round in shape, all but on one side, where the chair and the table were placed. From the chair the eye could command all the books as they stood ranged in five tiers of shelving round the walls. The room was sixteen paces in diameter, an excellent size. Opening into the library was a smaller cabinet fitted with a fireplace, to which the owner might retire in the winter.

In this tower, Mark Pattison tells us, Montaigne passed the greater part of his time. "There was his throne, there his rule was absolute. That only corner he preserved from the invasion of wife, children, or acquaintance." Elsewhere, like other people, he possessed but a divided authority, and for this reason he rejoiced that the access to his retreat was difficult, and of itself defended him from intruders. Here he lived, not so much reading books as turning them over, not so much meditating as allowing his reverie to follow its own course. I might describe many other famous book-rooms down to Mr. Gladstone's Temple of Peace, but there is no time. I will only say that Mr. Gladstone's name for his library seems to me particularly happy. The bookman who has built his book-room and furnished it ought to find it a temple of peace, and the chances are that he will.

## V.

IN conclusion, there is the question of production. It is easy to read; it is much more difficult to secure effectually the fruits of reading in the mind. It is more difficult still to make these fruits available for others. We all read and think many things we should wish to remember, but when we turn back they have fled from us. What is the remedy? Mr. John Morley, who writes on this subject with grave and ripe wisdom, makes some valuable suggestions. He says that most books worth reading once are worth reading twice, and the masterpieces of literature are worth reading a thousand times. Another practice is that of keeping a commonplace book, and transcribing into it what is striking and interesting and suggestive. Locke advised that every entry should be put under a division or sub-division. Gibbon agrees with Johnson, that what is twice read is commonly better remembered than what is transcribed. .

If I may venture to make a personal reference, I will say that I believe now in the plan of keeping a commonplace book. I have never

done so, but I can see that an accumulation of notes would have served me well, and that most men who are able to bring in easily refreshing literary allusions into their writings have been careful and assiduous note-takers. If you begin by making extracts from every worthy book you read in a rough form, and coördinate these quotations afterward, you will find that you have preserved much that is valuable, and much that would otherwise have been lost.

You will find also, unless I am much mistaken, that a great book remains a great book at different periods of life; the things that impressed you at twenty are not the things that impressed you at thirty, but that as the mind grows, and as life discloses its realities, the book has other things to say to you. The boy who reads "Don Quixote" at twelve and laughs over it, sees at fifty that he is reading the greatest book in the world. The "Pilgrim's Progress" is a story for children, a religious guide for devout readers, but it is not all at once that you recognize in it a chief masterpiece of English prose.

Then as to production, the greatest bookman of many years, the late Lord Acton, disappointed his friends by publishing comparatively little. He knew so well what a great book should be that he died while preparing to write one. Most of us who have lived much with books would have

a desire to leave some record of our musings. It is reasonable, but the desire should not become a craving. Amiel groaned over his unproductive nature. "I am tortured by the belief that production was required of me. May not my very remorse be a mistake and superfluity?" Scherer's phrase comes back to me: "We must accept ourselves as we are." Amiel's *Journal* is perhaps a more living book than any he could have written by concentrating the forces of his mind.

There may be a great and sincere passion for books in a mind that cannot produce, or at any rate cannot produce what is wanted. As George Eliot says, "An unfortunate duck can only lay blue eggs, however white ones may be in demand." Some of us sympathize with Oliver Wendell Holmes' hero, Byles Gridley, A.M., retired professor, more than sixty years old. He had put his life work into one book, "Thoughts on the Universe." This one literary venture seemed at first to go down with all that it held. But his life was in it, and it lived. He lived to be well pleased. "How beautifully serene Master Byles Gridley's face was growing! Clement loved to study his grand lines, which had so much strength and fine humanity blended in them."

But I will not say more on this tragical

theme of production. I have been speaking of books as ministers to the dignity, the wealth, the beauty of existence, to those who love them, not for their dowry, but for their sacred selves. However limited we may be by circumstances, however poor or sick or isolated, however we may be oppressed by drudgery, we may live nobly in the company of the master spirits. Books will break for us the common round of life. Through their ministration its dingy uniformity of color may be altered by an influx of grander forces. In spite of the Spanish proverb, and in spite of the politicians, men will still go on asking for something better than bread. Literature, says a student, is one of the instruments, and one of the most powerful instruments, for giving us men and women armed with reason, braced by knowledge, clothed with steadfastness and courage, and inspired by that public spirit and public fortitude of which it has been well said that they are the brightest ornaments of the minds of man.

A love of books will save us from fever, from fretfulness, from fear, from envy, from the baser and maligner passions. Nor will the solace fail us when the rest fail. On the contrary, it becomes greater and surer as the

toilsome years draw home. Soothed and fortified by beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies, at the end we may look up in peace, content with the work of the day.







